

Leadership Styles and CSR Practice: An Examination of Sensemaking, Institutional Drivers and CSR Leadership

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ABSTRACT. This article examines the explicit and implicit corporate social responsibility (CSR) framework and its implications for leadership style, in a major banking institution. Evidence for existence of the framework's key concepts in relation to leadership styles was explored through the self-reported sensemaking of leaders charged with CSR programme introduction. Qualitative data analysis indicated that explicit CSR is linked to an autocratic leadership style, whereas implicit CSR is more closely aligned with emergent and authentic styles. Although our results reinforced key aspects of the explicit and implicit CSR framework, they demonstrated conflicting systems of both CSR and leadership within our case organisation and highlighted the difficulty in categorising such a complex concept as CSR according to specific frameworks. Overall, our data suggest that the leadership styles, needed to successfully implement explicit and implicit CSR programmes, are in conflict. Given our finding that these CSR systems can coincide within one organisation, we suggest that the debating style of transformational leadership may be the required linchpin.

KEY WORDS: corporate social responsibility, institutional drivers, leadership

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a growing area of interest for academics and practitioners and in terms of both theory and practice. A recent trend in CSR literature, for example, is to examine the institutional drivers for CSR (e.g. Campbell, 2006; Waddock, 2008) with CSR increasingly viewed as a product of emergent institutional forces. Addressing the call for more empirical analysis of the role of

corporate leaders in formulating and implementing such organisational initiatives (Siegal, 2009), in this article, we examine how sensemaking of institutional drivers influences the organisational interpretation of CSR and in particular, intra-organisational leadership behaviours in the practice of CSR. Our analysis is set in the context of a current debate on the extent to which engaging in such practices is a matter of strategic choice (Matten and Moon, 2008; Siegal, 2009).

The institutional drivers for CSR are thought to come from the national business system (i.e. political, financial, education, labour and cultural systems, Matten and Moon, 2008, and its impacts on the organisational field, the organisation and the individual). Matten and Moon (2008) posit that traditional differences in national business systems drive two opposing forms of CSR, which they term 'implicit' and 'explicit' CSR. They argue that the 'neo-institutional' drivers in the organisational field are increasingly shifting corporations, globally, to explicit CSR. At the organisational level, cultural norms, in the form of subcultures, are postulated to drive different attitudes towards CSR (Linnenluecke et al., 2007). At the level of the individual, Basu and Palazzo (2008) call the cognitive, conative and linguistic processes of managers the internal institutional determinants of CSR.

In this article, we highlight the interaction between these four levels of institutional drivers represented in our model (Figure 1) and investigate the intra-organisational leadership behaviours that arise from their interaction. Our focus on leadership behaviours derives from previous study (Angus-Leppan and Benn, 2007) examining the key capabilities underpinning successful practice of CSR, in

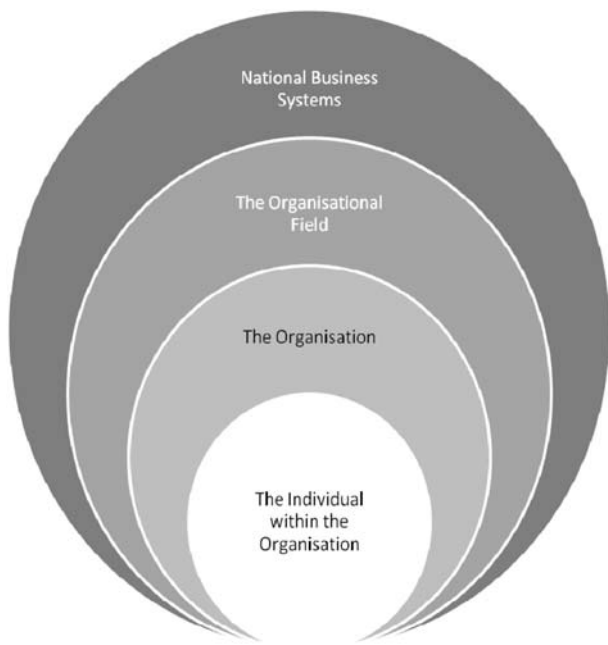


Figure 1. The four levels of institutional drivers.

which we found support for the literature positing that inspirational leadership is essential to successful CSR practice (e.g. Waddock and Bodwell, 2007).

This article is organised as follows. First, we briefly review and link the literature in three domains: CSR practice, sensemaking and leadership. Next, we describe our methodology, an embedded case study (Yin, 2003) of CSR practice at a major Australian bank that has achieved repeated success as a CSR practitioner according to the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and numerous other external indices of CSR and corporate sustainability. Finally, we present and discuss our findings and their implications.

CSR practice

Corporate social responsibility is an ambiguous and complex umbrella term of contested meaning (Matten and Moon, 2005). As such, it is often used interchangeably with terms such as corporate responsibility and corporate sustainability (Waddock and Bodwell, 2007). The ambiguity of CSR makes it problematic as a practice. CSR has gained popularity as a broad concept (Crook, 2005) commonly signifying the responsibility of the corporation to

stakeholders representing the tripartite concerns of ‘people, planet, profit’ (e.g. Cramer et al., 2006) but its implementation as a practice is still a ‘black box’ in the literature (Linnenluecke et al., 2007). Much of the literature on CSR to date has focussed on justifying in economic terms the various activities associated with CSR (Basu and Palazzo, 2008; Margolis and Walsh, 2003). While valuable, the emphasis to date on characterising and justifying CSR actions has left unexplored the antecedents of CSR, such as the societal level values or leadership behaviours that trigger or shape corporate responses in this domain (Basu and Palazzo, 2008; Waldman et al., 2006a, b).

Recent research and scholarly analysis has attempted to address this gap in the theorising of CSR. For example, Campbell (2006) proposes that CSR is more likely under institutional conditions such as strong state regulation, collective industrial self-regulation, independent monitoring organisations, a pro-responsibility institutional environment, membership of business associations and institutionalised stakeholder dialogue. Waddock (2008) on the other hand, uses broad categories of institutions as state/government, market/economic, and civil society to frame an inventory of the new institutional infrastructure driving CSR. Doh and Guay’s research (2006) also highlights the role of institutional environments in influencing policy making and community activity, and, hence, how CSR is interpreted at the organisational level.

CSR has recently been categorised into two competing approaches depending on institutional influences: ‘implicit’ and ‘explicit’ CSR (Matten and Moon, 2005, 2008). Implicit CSR is embedded in the business–society–government relations within a political system. It may result from strong norms, which all parties recognise and in which all participate. These norms may inform regulation whose legitimacy is confirmed by its democratic context or prevailing approach to policy making, such as participatory consensus-seeking practices. Matten and Moon (2008, p. 409) argue that implicit CSR is represented by ‘values, norms and rules, that result in (mandatory and customary) requirements for corporations to address stakeholder issues’.

Explicit CSR, on the other hand, is voluntary and implemented as a result of deliberate and often

strategic decisions made by the corporation. While the CSR practices might be the same for firms practising implicit versus explicit CSR, [Matten and Moon \(2008\)](#) emphasise differences in language and intention: corporations practising implicit CSR view CSR as an implicit element of the institutional framework of the corporation and do not describe values or norms-driven practices as CSR, whereas those practising explicit CSR communicate their policies and practices to stakeholders using the language of CSR as a strategy to foster shared meaning of its business value.

[Matten and Moon \(2008\)](#) attribute a rapid shift, worldwide, from implicit to explicit CSR to the emergence of a 'new institutionalism' where an increasing emphasis on symbolic action and meaning in the institutional environment is a force that directs institutional and, therefore, societal change at the level of norms and values ([March and Olsen, 1984](#)). They utilise the neo-institutionalist approach to account for explicit CSR, grouping the institutional forces for this CSR form under [DiMaggio and Powell's \(1983\)](#) three isomorphic forces – coercive, mimetic and normative. [Matten and Moon \(2005\)](#) hypothesise that the shift from implicit to explicit CSR may result from

- government/governance failures, with, for example, corporations stepping into a 'sub-political' role ([Beck, 1997](#)) in response to government failure to handle ecological crises;
- corporates seeking to obtain a social license to operate;
- corporates staying a step ahead of legislation;
- growing dependence of corporates on capital markets and growth of Socially Responsible Investment (SRI).

The implicit and explicit CSR framework was developed from a macro level comparison of European and US business systems and corporate approaches to CSR. [Matten and Moon \(2008\)](#) argue that the coordinated institutional environment for European companies encourages collectivism, social obligation and implicit CSR, whereas the liberal US institutional environment incentivises individualism, discretionary agency and explicit CSR. These differences result in the same activity – for example, employee healthcare – being viewed as explicit CSR

in US companies and implicit CSR in European firms ([Matten and Moon, 2005](#)).

This article explores the application of the framework at the level of the corporation, and in the Australian context. The literature linking culture and CSR leads us to expect the Australian context for CSR to influence CSR practice. For example, [Waldman et al. \(2006a, b\)](#) found that cultural dimensions predict the CSR values of executives. [Basu and Palazzo \(2008\)](#) argue that the mental frames of executives are the internal institutional factors that determine an organisation's approach to CSR. In this article, we search for evidence for the existence of implicit and explicit CSR, alongside the leadership styles linked to the organisation's attempt to make sense of the complex and ambiguous CSR concept. In organisation studies, ambiguity and complexity are most comprehensively addressed by sensemaking theory.

A sensemaking approach

Sensemaking describes the retrospective process that we use to reduce ambiguity and to address uncertainty: 'in the case of ambiguity, people engage in sensemaking because they are confused by too many interpretations, whereas in the case of uncertainty, they do so because they are ignorant of any interpretations' ([Weick, 1995](#), p. 91). Sensemaking describes how we create a consistent set of understandings for ourselves in the face of uncertainty, when we are confronted by contradictory or confusing events and circumstances not of our own making. According to [Weick \(2001\)](#), we aim to make sense of our experience of ambiguity in ways that preserve our positive sense of self by giving meaning to our actions in what is a continuous process of improvisation. Faced with ambiguity, uncertainty and complexity, we select sensemaking with its focus on interpretation reinforced by action rather than linear decision-making processes with their focus on rational evaluation and choice ([Weick et al., 2005](#)). Sensemaking precedes decision-making: it is a 'waystation on the road to a consensually constructed, coordinated system of action' ([Taylor and Van Every, 2000](#), p. 275).

Sensemaking may also follow decision making ([Maitlis, 2005](#)). The 'trigger' for sensemaking is chaos, or perceived contradictions, when the normal

flow of action is disturbed by equivocal information, decisions or circumstances: 'discrepancies, surprise, the unexpected, the dissonant, are implied as the occasion that stirs thought' (Weick, 2001, p. 10). When faced with chaos, people look for some explanation to resume what they were doing before the disruption, such as various institutional pressures, organisational norms and values and a range of traditionally accepted ways of looking at the world (Weick et al., 2005). If action cannot be resumed, and faced with conditions of dissonance, the process of interpretation is prompted and the new data or circumstances can be given meaning (Daft and Weick, 1984). What follows next is a new response or action based on the interpretation – in effect, learning (Daft and Weick, 1984, p. 286). Feedback from learning in turn provides new data for interpretation or reinterpretation.

Weick (2001) argues that there are frequent opportunities for sensemaking in organisations because organisations typically produce ambiguity – mostly because organisational work is assumed to involve rationally based choice and evaluation. Yet, the reality is more of many loosely coupled systems with highly undefined relationships, such as the relationship between the finance system and CSR. The fact that CSR is only loosely coupled, for instance, to the finance system (Lee, 2008) makes for conditions of ambiguity. We see sensemaking as an important and relevant theory of meaning and action in the context of this article because of such ambiguities around CSR and CSR practice. These have been highlighted in previous research undertaken by the authors indicating the diversity in interpretations and value estimations of CSR and its human and ecological elements among the different stakeholder groups of one organisation (Angus-Leppan et al., *in press*).

In accordance with Basu and Palazzo (2008), we also see sensemaking as a potential internal institutional determinant of CSR and, therefore, worthy of investigation in the context of CSR. As Basu and Palazzo (2008, p. 124) argue, sensemaking provides insight into the mental models that underlie perceptions of CSR and 'diagnosing such mental frames' might help us understand the causes of this ambiguity. Basu and Palazzo (2008, p. 124) argue that the firm's decisions on CSR emerge

from *manager* sensemaking of CSR: 'decisions regarding CSR activities are made by managers and stem from their mental models regarding their sense of who they are in the world'. Basu and Palazzo (2008) equate manager sensemaking with organisational sensemaking, but recommend that future research takes a more nuanced approach and investigates the relationships between CSR sensemaking and leadership styles adopted in the practice of CSR. This relationship is described in the next section.

What is leadership?

In this article, we build on Basu and Palazzo's (2008) suggestion and take a more fine-grained approach to manager/organisational sensemaking by exploring it through the lens of leaders. Leaders are not necessarily managers, although the study of leadership is dominated by a dyadic relationship between formally designated leaders (or managers) and their subordinates. The much-studied field of leadership is plagued with a plethora of contested definitions (Jackson, 2005), prompting Yukl (2001) to claim that the only consistent definition of leadership is that of a process of influence.

When defined as a process of influence, leadership is broader than management. Influence can come from stakeholders inside and outside the firm (e.g. Frooman, 1999). Hence, leadership moves from the concept of leadership as a *relationship* to the concept of leadership as a *social process that contains complex relationships* (Barker, 2001). For example, Gemmil and Oakley (1992) define leadership as 'a social process ... of dynamic collaboration, where individuals and organisation members authorise themselves and others to interact in ways that experiment with new forms of intellectual and social meaning' (p. 124). In discussing leadership in more detail, it is important to do so in the context of CSR. As leadership styles are often context specific, we next explore current understandings of leadership as it applies to CSR, noting Waldman's point (in the letter exchange between Waldman and Siegel, 2008) that there is very little mention of the role of leadership in the academic CSR literature.

Leadership for CSR

As leading scholars, Waldman and Siegel (2008) agree in their letter exchange, empirical studies of CSR have largely ignored the place of the corporate leader in implementing CSR initiatives. Although top managers are obviously in the best position to influence these types of strategies and projects, researchers have previously failed to examine the effect of leader values, ethics and style in regards to CSR (Waldman and Siegel, 2008). The letter exchange reveals Waldman's preference for strategic CSR, defined as '... dimensions of CSR that are likely to be matrixed in the business and corporate strategies of firms ...' (p. 118), which we believe translates to a version of Matten and Moon's (2008) explicit CSR.

In their 2008 letter exchange, Waldman resists the usefulness of purely 'values-driven' CSR, or CSR driven by the manager's personal values, as he argues that managers are not accountable to society, but to the firm's shareholders and, furthermore, he argues managers have no way of knowing the true needs of stakeholders. Waldman's argument implies that the most appropriate leadership style for organisations implementing CSR strategies is that which is strategically driven and which does not require maintaining an integrity to personal values. Siegel, on the other hand, argues that leader integrity to personal morality can yield positive outcomes for businesses and may actually be the driver of CSR strategies in organisations (Waldman and Siegel, 2008).

Waldman (in the letter exchange between Waldman and Siegel, 2008) does not link his strategically driven CSR leadership to any empirically researched leadership style. However Siegel's reference to the personal values of a CSR leader is at least indicative of ethical and moral leadership styles. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that our understanding of CSR can be usefully informed by the literature on ethical and moral leadership models. We note that Siegel (in the letter exchange between Waldman and Siegel, 2008) indicates that moral leadership may actually be a driver of CSR which may also be of strategic benefit to organisations. De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) found that leaders, who demonstrated a sense of right versus wrong, duty, concern for others, concern for consequences and also had a tendency to judge their

own behaviour, were seen as ethical leaders. In particular, a sense of duty was found to link most strongly with the perception of ethical leadership. This type of leadership was most prominent in non-profit organisations. In addition, leaders who value the breadth of their organisation's stakeholders appear to be more successful in their leadership positions, according to the financial and social success achieved by their organisation.

In Sully de Luque et al. (2006), researchers examined the values of 500 CEO's in 17 countries, asking what factor or values were most important in their decision making. The results indicated that leaders with strong economic values were viewed as authoritarian and failed to be visionary; however, leaders with strong stakeholder values were viewed as visionary and not authoritarian. Finally, this study also found that visionary leaders with strong stakeholder values were in the most financially successful companies. Ethical leadership has been positively linked to other elements of organisational effectiveness (Brown et al., 2005; De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008; Khuntia and Suar, 2004). De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) found that 'morality & fairness' and role clarification were both positively correlated with optimism about the future and perceived top level management effectiveness. However, as Waldman and Siegel (2008) agree in their letter exchange, more cross-level research is needed to clarify links between leadership behaviours and styles and CSR.

Walumbwa et al. (2008) also found that authentic leadership, where leader behaviour keeps its integrity with the leaders' personal values, had strong correlations with specific job outcomes. These researchers used their own questionnaire measure of authenticity and defined this leadership style as:

... a pattern of leader behaviour that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development (p. 94).

They surveyed 478 students with a mean age of 32 years and found authentic leadership to correlate positively with job performance. These researchers also found smaller, but still significant, positive

correlations with job satisfaction and organisational climate. This finding of the value of leader integrity was also found in Thomas et al. (2004) where leadership integrity was associated with several positive business outcomes including reduced business costs.

Finally, although transformational leaders are not necessarily described as ethical or socially responsible, the theory on this form of leadership does require that such leaders are trusted (Boerner et al., 2007) which indicates a potential link to integrity through congruous behaviours. Transformational leadership has long been linked to organisational performance through individual studies and meta-analyses (DeGroot et al., 2000). In particular, transformational leadership has a strong link to innovation (Shin and Zhou, 2003) which Boerner et al. (2007) argue is largely due to the mediating factor of debate that this leadership style encourages, thereby creating an environment where debate is used to make sense of novel ideas and new areas.

As discussed, authentic leadership, ethical leadership and transformational leadership have each been indirectly or directly linked to corporate sustainability and CSR. These three leadership styles show a degree of conceptual overlap although the literature also describes some distinct differences between them. Ethical leaders display behaviours that indicate they seek to do the right thing (Trevino et al., 2000), they are consistent in their pursuit of their ethical standards and they do not compromise when others pressure them (Brown et al., 2005). Ethical leadership and authentic leadership share an emphasis on honesty, openness and integrity as well as a desire to do what is right. However, ethical leaders have been found to use punishment to hold people accountable for ethical conduct (Brown and Trevino, 2006), something which is not mentioned for authentic or transformational leadership. Transformational leaders are charismatic: they inspire, stimulate intellectually, consider the individual and influence through idealised visions. However, there is no indication that transformational leaders are aware of their own motivations and values, something which is true for authentic leaders (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Walumbwa et al. (2008) also argue that transformational leaders aim to develop followers into leaders, whereas authentic leaders aim to develop followers towards personal authenticity, not necessarily a leadership role.

Another and strongly contrasting style is autocratic leadership, perhaps the first leadership style to be linked to CSR. Thomas Hobbes, in his book, *Leviathan* (1651, 1985), argued this form of influence to be the only way to control selfishness in the commercial world. This style is characterised by coercion and a distinct lack of democratic process in decision making (Van Vugt et al., 2004). Although autocratic leadership has been largely ignored in the research literature for the past decade, researchers studying the topic in the second half of the twentieth century found support for Hobbes's argument, showing that a controlling leader can effectively resolve and prevent social dilemmas (Arrow, 1951; Hardin, 1968; Messick and Brewer, 1983; Ziller, 1965). Interestingly, group members have been found to be very willing to give up their freedom of decision making to their leader to solve a social dilemma (Foddy and Crettendon, 1994; Messick and Brewer, 1983; Rutte and Wilke, 1984; Samuelson and Messick, 1986, 1995; Wilke, 1991). However, this style has also been found to be the least popular choice among groups seeking a leader to improve their social performance (Van Vugt and De Cremer, 1999). In a later study, Van Vugt et al. (2004) also found that autocratic leaders are less likely to have stable numbers of staff in voluntary group situations as people feel less loyalty to the group, thus impacting staff engagement at work and the development of a positive internal CSR culture.

Leadership for explicit and implicit CSR

Crossan et al. (2008) focus on describing a framework for effective strategic leadership in dynamic environments. These hypercompetitive and increasingly complex environments have given rise to a need to deal with extensive amounts of information where continuity of existing business operations may not be assumed (Foster and Kaplan, 2001), thereby increasing demands on the skills of leaders. Researchers have proposed that the new key responsibility of leadership is sensemaking of the external environment as leaders must help the organisation stay aware of and adapt to the rapid changes in its industry and new stakeholder demands (Crossan and Hulland, 2002; Vera and Crossan, 2004). Given this level of complexity, it seems unlikely that a single leader will have sufficient

information to develop correct decisions for the organisation. Some scholars suggest 'shared leadership' as the preferred model, arguing that leaders encouraging leadership behaviour throughout the organisation will be more effective in this type of environment (Ireland and Hill, 2005; Pearce and Conger, 2003).

If, as suggested, we take CSR to be both ambiguous and complex, then this research indicates a shared leadership, and sensemaking approach may be the most appropriate for organisations struggling with a demand for increasing social and environmental responsibility in their industry environment. If this is the case then organisations struggling with CSR implementation may force the surfacing of unofficial/emergent leaders. Emergent leaders are not formally appointed so they exert influence through the willing support of other group members (De Souza and Klein, 1995). They become leaders by exhibiting behaviour that others perceive as leader-like (Lord and Maher, 1991). In particular, researchers have found emergent leaders to show intelligence, masculinity, dominance (Lord et al., 1986) and self monitoring (Kickul and Neuman, 2000). Stewart (2002) also found emergent leaders were more likely to be extroverted and open. Interestingly, although emergent leadership is touted as a substitute for traditional hierarchical leadership (Rubin et al., 2002), there is not yet any empirical data relating emergent leadership with ethical behaviour or CSR.

In this study, we recognise the complexity that surrounds the introduction of CSR programmes in organisations. Recognising CSR as a constantly shifting concept that puts leaders in the position of acting as 'sensemakers' for their organisations, we propose that this sensemaking will have encouraged emergent and authentic leaders but that more historical, hierarchical forms of leadership will also be present. It also seems likely that hierarchical leadership will be more closely aligned with a form of CSR that is process based, or explicit CSR, whereas authentic and emergent leaders may show an alignment with the more values based, implicit form of CSR.

However, this very complexity of CSR in organisations means that another potential style of leadership may be that of complexity leadership. As Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) explain, complex leaders enable the future rather than direct it, they use

language to create shared meaning from conflict that they surface, creating conditions for people to innovate as individuals and learn as a social group. The business benefits of complexity leadership are yet to be demonstrated empirically. However, the case study of the 'Mission Church' (Plowman et al., 2007) does play out some aspects of this form of leadership. This unique study of a church undergoing radical change, involving an alteration of attendees from middle class people to the homeless resulted in a need for leaders to bring about rapid organisational change. Plowman et al. (2007) found that leaders refrained from dictating direction and instead took on a role of disrupting existing patterns, surfacing conflict, embracing uncertainty and using simple rules and enabling sensemaking to encourage a new direction. The result was a reinvigorated church with local recognition for its ministry of the homeless. In our view, further empirical work is needed to support the evidence from this single case study concerning this leadership style. However, drawing on the example of the Mission Church, it does seem reasonable to predict that CSR implementation in organisations may encourage the emergence of this type of leadership approach due to the potential for ambiguity and complexity associated with conflicting stakeholder demands.

In this article, we aim to examine the leadership styles that are most prominent in an organisation coping with a dynamic environment in the sustainability space. It extends current thinking by looking at how implicit and explicit forms of CSR play out in an organisational context and how leadership interacts with explicit and implicit CSR. Hence, we address Waldman and Siegel's (2008) concerns at the lack of research around CSR and leadership as well as contributing to the understanding of institutional frameworks that might act as antecedents of CSR. In addition, the wide diversity of leadership styles associated with CSR, leads us to predict that we will find evidence for particular leadership styles to be associated with the specific implicit or explicit CSR forms, generating an overall perspective of two opposing systems.

In summary, our model, as set out in Figure 2, proposes that institutional forces such as national business systems and social norms impact upon the organisation, creating an internal environment that stimulates organisational practices and sensemaking

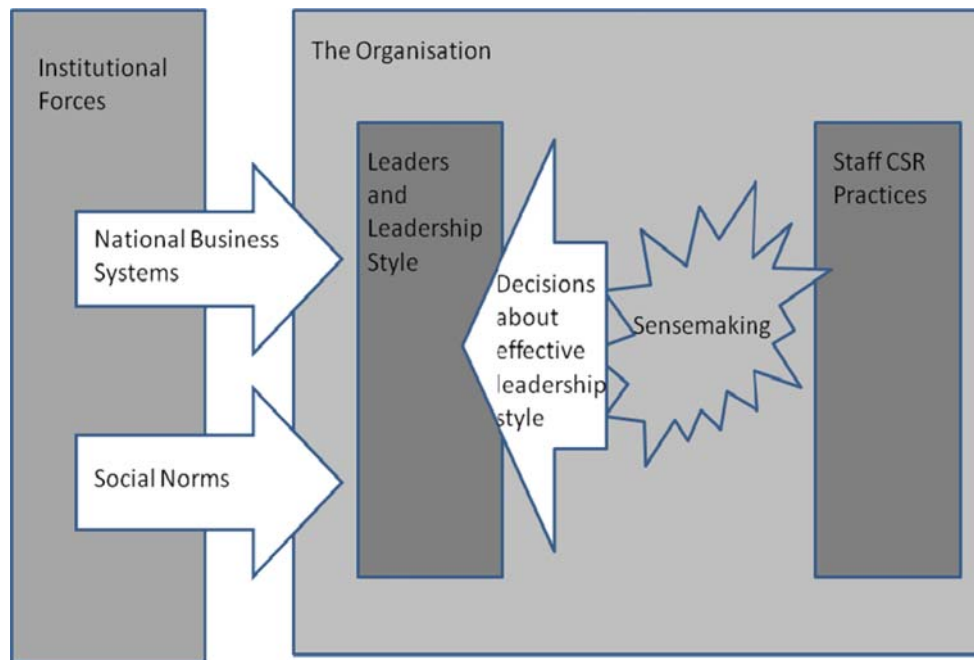


Figure 2. Model of interaction of variables.

around these. This also impacts on leaders as it engages decisions about what may be an appropriate leadership style for the changing organisation.

Methodology

This research focuses on the CSR leadership of a major Australian bank, rated highly for corporate sustainability and CSR as judged by repeated high performance on the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, Carbon Disclosure Project Index, Global 100 Most Sustainable Corporations, GovernanceMetrics International Global Governance Ratings, Employer of Choice for Women in Australia (EOWA), World's Most Ethical Companies List and the Corporate Responsibility Index (<http://www.corporate-responsibility.com.au/>, accessed 9 February 2009).¹ The bank is also included in the FTSE4Good Index. The bank's corporate sustainability and CSR initiatives are wide-ranging, extensively reported, and supported at Board level. They include leadership on national panels lobbying to reform policy on climate change, serving as a founding member of international CSR initiatives such as the Equator Principles,² initiating highly regarded community partnerships designed to contribute to the

public good, award-winning employee volunteering schemes, pioneering sustainable supply chain management, upholding principles for responsible lending and three 'responsible' products or product extensions (an initiative coordinated directly by the Board and intended to 'leverage our corporate sustainability profile' and add value). Details can be obtained from the authors, but are withheld here to comply with anonymity requirements.

Method

This is an open-ended exploratory study, asking 'how' and 'why' CSR leadership happens, and is, therefore, appropriate to a qualitative method. Qualitative research is interpretative and inductive, open to unanticipated events, focused on naturally occurring, socially constructed processes and meanings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Gephart, 2004) and, therefore, especially useful in the exploratory stages of theory development (Tesch, 1990).

The data used in this analysis includes 11 in-depth interviews with a range of officially appointed and 'emergent' CSR leaders within the bank and one NGO advisor who sits on the bank's key stakeholder

advisory group, the Community Consultative Council. In addition, the data includes nine observed and recorded meetings and forums. The meetings included green product discussion group forums, customer committees and leader forums. The researcher was present at these meetings, in the capacity of observer, and recorded the meeting. One interviewee was an ex-employee of the bank at the time of interview but held a significant CSR leader position during her employment tenure there. This person was included in our CSR leader sample on the suggestion of a current CSR leader as it was felt they would have a better perspective on the early days of CSR implementation.

The selection of interviewees took place in three ways. First, we asked a member of the bank's Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability team to identify the CSR leaders at the bank. He developed a list, some officially appointed and some 'emerging' leaders as employees at the bank who have self-selected themselves to integrate CSR into their work roles. He then approached the selected interviewees on our behalf, with an information sheet explaining the project. Second, we asked each interviewee to recommend a CSR leader; an ex-employee was recruited through this process. Third, we attended a 'green home' workshop at the bank's call centre and asked for volunteers to participate in the project. We initially held a focus group with the call centre volunteers, and through that process, identified another emergent leader.

Interviews and observations were conducted during the period January–November 2008. The interview guide was developed iteratively (sample interview questions are contained in the appendix), as the fieldwork progressed and we gained more insight into the issues around CSR leadership. This is an accepted procedure in qualitative research. For example, leading qualitative methodologist Gephart (2004, p. 455) comments that 'qualitative research is often designed at the same time it is being done'. Most interviews lasted 60 min and were recorded, allowing the interviewer to concentrate on questioning and listening, to provide an accurate and unbiased record, and, perhaps most importantly, to use direct quotes (Saunders et al., 2003). The audio-recorded discussions were transcribed verbatim by a

professional transcriber with respondent names coded as 'interviewee' to maintain anonymity.

Analysis

The meeting transcripts were included in the analysis as a means of data triangulation, to validate interview findings. The 11 interview transcripts were analysed using content analysis. Content analysis is a research technique for breaking down text into categories based on explicit rules of coding (Krippendorff, 2004). Content analysis allows the researcher to analyse large volumes of data in a systematic way, to discover and describe the issues of focal importance to the interview subjects.

Approaches to content analysis generally fall into two major categories: thematic or conceptual analysis, and semantic or relational analysis. Conceptual analysis, the most common form of content analysis, involves the detection of explicit and implicit concepts in the text. Relational analysis measures the relationships between concepts. The central difficulty with content analysis is in the compression of text into content categories, known as coding. The validity and reliability of human coding is difficult to verify. Two types of reliability are pertinent to content analysis: stability and reproducibility. Stability relies on the researcher consistently coding the text in the same way, over time. Reproducibility relies on different human coders consistently classifying the text. Gephart (2004) recommends the use of computer-aided textual analysis as it allows for more systematic, comprehensive and exhaustive analysis.

The first step in our analysis was to operationalise the concepts that we would be looking for in the content analysis of our interview and field observation data. In order to do this, we reviewed the extant research to generate indicators for the leadership styles and forms of CSR, which we were interested in (see Table I). We note that our conceptual analysis conflates CSR and sustainability as they are treated interchangeably by our case organisation. For example, the team responsible for implementing CSR is the Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability team. The researchers then operationalised these

TABLE I
Operationalisation of key concepts

Concept	Indicators
Explicit CSR	Reference to publicising and formalising CSR and organisational values. Reference to processes surrounding CSR such as reporting either externally or internally on organisational values
Implicit CSR	Reference to expressed personal values, informal discussion of CSR and ethical issues and CSR or organisational values not publicised or promoted
Emergent leadership	Reference to an unofficial leader who steps forward to spur CSR initiatives despite the fact that leadership or leadership in CSR is not in their job description or role
Authentic leadership	Behaviours linking with personal values of the leader. Reference to organisational expectations of leaders conflicting with leaders' personal values and that conflict resulting in passionate defiance or questioning of those expectations
Autocratic leadership	Reference to reward and punishment behaviour or reliance on process and position to influence others
Sensemaking	Reference to triggers, or incidents that spur actions around CSR, interpretation of events through incidents of discussions and arguments, and actions that occur as a result of the interpretation or trigger

indicators through the keywords flagged in the content analysis software.

Leximancer content analysis software

The content analysis software used for this analysis, Leximancer, adds reliability by using machine learning rather than the researchers' interpretations to generate and apply coding to the text of the interview. This adds reliability to the concepts that are built and the meanings that are attached to informants' discussion. As such, it provides an important and transparent contrast to interpretation by the researcher and so fosters analytic triangulation (Leximancer, 2005).

Leximancer settings used for this analysis

For the Leximancer analysis, we initially allowed the software to automatically generate a list of keywords from the dialogue. We then chose the keywords from the list that were most representative of the three leadership dimensions – autocratic, authentic and emergent and the two CSR dimensions – explicit and implicit – and used these key words to seed a further

analysis that generated 'concepts'. We decided against presenting concepts related to the three elements of sensemaking – trigger, interpret and act (Weick, 2001) – because the map became illegibly crowded when these concepts were present.

Findings

Leximancer map

Figure 3 'maps' the dialogue from the 11 transcripts in terms of frequency and relationships between 'concepts' (grey-black text labels), 'themes' (circles) and people interviewed (tags such as TG_CREDIT MANAGER_TG). Concepts are groups of words that travel together through the text. The darker the concept on the map, and the larger the dot point behind the concept label, the more frequently it occurs across the text.

The 'theme' circles group together concepts with contextual similarity. The size of the themes can be adjusted; for this map, we left the size on the default setting of 33%. The name of the theme is taken from the name of the largest concept within the theme circle. The themes are 'teamwork', 'business case', 'leadership', 'values', 'power', 'strategy', 'politics',

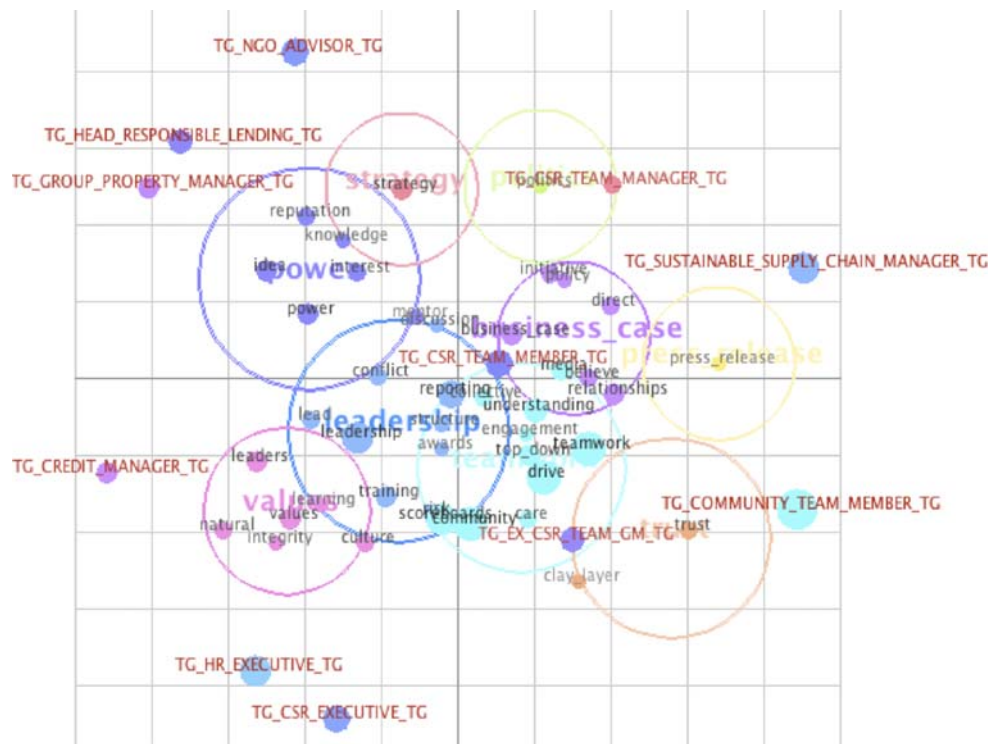


Figure 3. Leximancer map of the 11 interview transcripts showing leadership and explicit/implicit CSR concepts.

‘press release’ and ‘trust’. Overlapping themes show interconnection: in Figure 3, the ‘leadership’ theme overlaps ‘power’, ‘teamwork’ and ‘values’, suggesting that ‘powerful’ leadership is linked to harnessing teamwork and values. The ‘strategy’ theme is also linked to ‘power’ on one hand and ‘politics’ on the other, suggesting the strategic importance of politics to leadership for CSR. The ‘teamwork’ theme also overlaps with ‘trust’ and ‘business case’ and ‘business case’ overlaps with the concept of ‘press release’, suggesting the incentive for teamwork comes from ‘trust’ on one hand and, on the other, from having a ‘business case’ for CSR, and this ‘business case’ may be generated by a press release, a way of making CSR explicit and the ‘team’ accountable for the fulfilment of a CSR objective.

The ‘tags’ (e.g. TG_Community_ADVISOR_TG) refer to the interviewees. The proximity of each tag to the other tags indicates similarity in content. Overall, the tags are spread out over the map, indicating diverse comments; especially considering this map being a two-dimensional representation of a multi-dimensional map. However, there is relative similarity in content between the HR Executive and the CSR

Executive, and between the Head of Responsible Lending and the Group Property Manager. The placement of the tags relative to concepts also indicates the conceptual focus of each interviewee’s comments. Table II depicts the broad focus of each interviewee, grouped in four segments, moving clockwise from the bottom left hand segment of the map.

Overall, the map demonstrates the existence of two systems of CSR and leadership that are also in conflict: implicit CSR, values and authentic leadership versus (indicated by the concept ‘conflict’) explicit CSR, PR and autocratic leadership. Our analysis found evidence for an explicit CSR, framed as strategy, as well as an implicit CSR, framed in terms of values. We also found evidence for authentic leadership alongside autocratic leadership. The link between the two is ‘conflict’, indicating possibly two co-existing systems of sensemaking in relation to CSR leadership – explicit and implicit CSR in the same organisation – and they are in conflict. In essence, this analysis found two opposing systems of CSR. It found implicit CSR as demonstrated through values and explicit CSR as demonstrated through organisational strategy. In addition, these

TABLE II
Interviewees area of focus in relation to leadership and CSR

Interviewee	Broad focus of content in relation to leadership and CSR
HR Executive	Values, scoreboards, training, implicit CSR, leadership, leaders, learning, culture
CSR Executive	
Credit Manager	
Head of Responsible Lending	Reputation, knowledge, idea, strategy, power
Group Property Manager	
Community Advisor	
CSR Team Manager	Politics, policy, relationships, directing, explicit CSR, press release, business case
Sustainable Supply Chain Manager	
CSR Team Member	
Community Team Member	Trust, community, care, drive, teamwork, engagement, top-down
Ex-CSR Team GM	

two systems were linked through the concept of conflict, further indicating that conflict interlinked the two systems. We note, however, that conflict in this sense may not simply be a problem; it may also be evidence of the opportunity for creativity.

Exemplary quotes

The text browser in Leximancer allows the user to ‘drill down’ into concepts and read the blocks of sentences (i.e. quotes) that have been coded as corresponding with each concept. Table III lists exemplary quotes from each of the 11 interviewees, against the two CSR dimensions, the three leadership dimensions and three elements of sensemaking ‘trigger’, ‘interpret’ and ‘act’. Table III indicates not just the sensemaking of each dimension (reading down each column) but also provides a profile of each CSR leader’s sensemaking on the eight dimensions. These results will be discussed next.

Contiguous systems: implicit and explicit CSR

As shown on the Leximancer map (Figure 3) and as highlighted by the quotes in Table III, implicit and explicit CSR co-exist at the bank, and are in conflict. Within each interview, we see the existence of these opposing systems along with traces of the contradictions and the confusion this creates. For example, the CSR Executive speaks in past tense about explicit

CSR and utilising the Annual Report ‘to take the company forward’, and so rebuilding the reputation of the bank, through deploying a new CSR agenda. In this comment, shown in Table III, he refers to the late 1990s when the Australian banking industry came under fire for high fees and closing branches and ‘staff were afraid to wear their uniforms on public transport for fear of being heckled’. As the NGO Advisor notes, also in Table III, the initial ‘trigger’ for CSR has been clearly enunciated by the CEO as ‘rebuilding reputation’. However, the remainder of the conversation with the CSR Executive is about implicit CSR, in terms of values and embedding CSR. As shown in Table III, he says, ‘we hate the term CSR ... it implies that the normal process for business is not responsible’, preferring to call CSR a ‘proxy for good management’, the trigger for this definition being the desire to ‘align the behaviours’ of the bank staff, implying that the goal is to have CSR embedded in the ‘conversations going on in every branch’. This interview is particularly revealing as it so clearly articulates both the existence of and the conflict between the two CSR systems. The CSR Executive is struggling with the apparently opposing systems.

We see this struggle again in the interview with the HR Executive. Where the CSR Executive speaks in aspirational terms about implicit CSR, as shown in Table III, the HR Executive claims CSR is already implicit, saying, ‘it’s like we don’t need it in our scoreboards any more’ and ‘it’s actually quite grass roots now’. She refers to CSR as embedded in the company values, especially ‘integrity’, and opines

TABLE III
Exemplary quotes

CSR leaders	CSR Form		Leadership	
	Explicit CSR	Implicit CSR	Emergent leadership	Authentic leadership
Head of Responsible Lending	I would love a television ad for the program	It's practical, simple' low-tech and low cost. We started doing this before it was fashionable	I didn't actually apply for the job, it just kind of happened	It's not me coming along telling them what they ought to be doing
Former CSR Team General Manager	Someone told me that the previous GM made policy by press release	CSR is not a program it's a philosophy	By talking it through a bit we let people take ownership	In truth I just didn't get it right
CSR Team Member	Sustainability is one of the key measures of our performance and that's been formalised	Sustainability is part of the blood flow now of the business	That's come from the customer facing side of the business directly, it's an idea that's come from them	It's an expectation that decisions will be challenged by any member of the team
Sustainable Supply Chain Manager	It's a way of making things happen through making it public and making you accountable	Sometimes a really ethical initiative doesn't get you great press	There is a guy in IT and he's certainly taking a lead there	'Engagement' is not really supported at the bank
Community Team Member	(CSR Executive) made a decision that as long as we've got substance behind it, it's ok to talk about it	Volunteering is part of the culture	I'm not a person that's afraid to speak up, which gets me into trouble a lot of times	I try to be conscious of the impacts of my decisions on people in the frontline
CSR Team Manager	You're just constantly skimming through everything publicly available	It's quite simple at the end of the day. A bank is a bank, is a bank	The role is self-determining. People expect you to achieve something but they're not sure what	
Credit Manager	I use the bank's community work as ammunition to hose the bank bashers down a bit	The staff should have decided instead of dumping old type-writers we'll fix them and give them to charity	Donating money is important so I give talks about Matching Gifts because staff don't know about it	I think humility is important and I always try to put myself in the other person's shoes
CSR Executive	We unashamedly used the Annual Report to take the company forward	There are probably four conversations going on in every branch, that is the real responsibility piece	I have got no doubt that real leadership occurs at the customer interface	It is about building trust and respect for the intent... you have got to walk the talk

TABLE III
continued

CSR leaders	CSR Form		Leadership	
	Explicit CSR	Implicit CSR	Emergent leadership	Authentic leadership
HR Executive	With CSR, staff are much more comfortable talking about that than our products because our CSR credentials are quite strong	It's interesting, its actually quite grass roots now	People really believed it. They really believed it and they'll say 'oh I want to bandana day? Is that alright?'	... if somebody did something that was against our values ...well you just can't really tolerate that
Group Property Manager	Because of the profile that it has in the media, CSR is quite inspirational	CSR is like a multi-dimensional consideration of how you affect the world and the people	It was something no one else would do and I thought I am going to do it and incorporate it into my role	We are very consensus driven
Community Advisor	Strategically that's the next step, having built a good reputation, you start to build the leverage for your products	I don't get the sense there is the kind of culture that is necessary to make these things really work	There are people there who are just absolutely passionate about this whole thing	See I think their commitment ... goes beyond the business case
CSR leaders	Leadership		Sensemaking	
	Autocratic	Trigger	Interpret	Act
Head of Responsible Lending	I say 'Look, I can see what you're getting at, but I honestly don't feel there's a big issue'	I'm kind of an internal gorilla underground movement	Often staff wonder, 'am I doing the wrong thing?' So we bat about the issues	If you give somebody an answer too quickly they often think you haven't really thought it through
Former CSR Team General Manager	To crash through and drive people just isn't me	You couldn't run it but you had to be the people who day by day shook people up	So you put another extra dimension onto a job that people weren't expecting	But when the crunch comes the CR people are the first ones out the door
CSR Team Member	Ultimately the decision making process is hierarchical	Here it's self leadership, like throwing a kid in to the pool and watching the instinct kick in	Last year I didn't know what I didn't know but this year I know I know less than I ought to. Does that make sense?	In the branch perhaps its more structured than that
Sustainable Supply Chain Manager	I think the underlying support is there to be Machiavellian	The real trick in leadership is how do you get people to act, how do you trigger that?	I think we're ripe for cultural change, we're going through it externally, but it needs to be within	Our policies deliver on paper a hell of a lot more than what's happening on the ground

TABLE III
continued

CSR leaders	Leadership Autocratic	Sensemaking		
		Trigger	Interpret	Act
Community Team Member	We are still very hierarchical. I think that is a hindrance. They say you are encouraged to speak up but they don't go by what they say	We don't have any objectives or clear job descriptions. How can you tell if someone has done a good job? It's mandatory but not for us	Community is seen as the poor cousin of CSR	It's going to be fantastic when (CSR Executive) leaves because he doesn't care about his employees
CSR Team Manager	You'd waver and say 'oh I don't know if we are going to get them across the line' and (CSR Executive) would be like 'bullshit, yes we are'	All the execs volunteer because they don't want to be seen as missing out on something the others are doing	When people have to sit in front of their peers and explain why they haven't done anything for a month it's remarkably effective	It's the ultimate demonstration of internal corporate politics, how to get things done
Credit Manager	I wanted to use a second hand monitor but the paperwork was too hard	It really came home to me at the first green home workshop, I wanted to get more active	The government's not screaming at people about climate change so they don't take it seriously	I'm circulating 2 copies of Al Gore's movie around the office, I tell people, 'it may spark something in you' CSR is a proxy for good management
CSR Executive	Even when you get people to accept that there's issues, it is then a major thing to get them to change	How do you align the behaviours of 27,000 people?	The fact that a term like CSR exists implies that the normal process for business is not responsible	
HR Executive	In the CEO's scoreboard is the goal to hold number one position in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index	We know young people are very committed to work for a company that has a stated CSR agenda	CSR's not helping retention. What has people leave is their immediate leader or career opportunities	We ask 'why did you choose to work here?' and they often cite the CSR as the reason
Group Property Manager	My manager's manager she will say 'I am not spending money here'	Because I had this overview it just seemed like I had the opportunity to do it	It's easy to convince people when you can say that you'll save money as well	I established the group properties sustainability group and made all my senior managers come and listen
Community Advisor	It's still a very traditional bank in it's attitudes ... we're powerful and you are little	To actually have a forum in which I can express ideas and have the CEO listen to them	It is remarkable to be working with a CEO who says 'what issues are on your mind?' and sits there for 2.5 h and listens	I think most of us would be willing to give them the benefit of the doubt and say everyone makes mistakes

that people don't talk about CSR, but about not acting 'against our values'. However, she also draws on examples that suggest implicit CSR is not uniformly entrenched at the bank, revealing that her sensemaking of CSR is in fact both explicit and implicit. For example, as shown in Figure 3, 'in the CEO's scoreboard is the goal to hold number one position in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index', which is a very explicit CSR goal. Also, in talking about how CSR helps attract new 'talent', she indicates that this form of CSR is explicitly and instrumentally promoted to potential staff. Similarly, in discussing the fact that 'CSR's not helping retention', she appears to be overlooking the link between employee welfare and CSR as espoused at the bank, instead suggesting that the bank's implicit CSR does not cover employee matters. This finding clearly demonstrates that CSR is interpreted as relevant to external stakeholders, deliberately used for talent attraction, a form of explicit CSR, rather than talent retention, something that is more suited to implicit CSR.

Explicit CSR is dominant

Across all the interviewees, although there was certainly evidence for implicit CSR, explicit CSR seemed more dominant. As shown in Table III, the CSR Team Member comments 'sustainability is part of the blood flow of the business' and the Community Team Member claims 'volunteering is part of the culture'. However, the NGO Advisor feels that, overall, 'I don't get the sense there is the kind of culture that is necessary to make these things really work'.

In addition, also shown in Table III, the HR Executive clearly describes how it is explicit CSR that is used for 'sensemaking'. The HR Executive (perhaps unwittingly) points out that the bank's CSR 'credentials' are stronger than the bank's product credentials. The former CSR Team General Manager describes CSR as a tool for making 'policy by press release' and the Sustainable Supply Chain Manager comments 'making things happen through making it public and making you accountable'. These are comments relating to methods for overcoming internal resistance to CSR. In sensemaking terms, the CSR Team Manager explains her actions

'to get things done' as 'the ultimate demonstration of internal corporate politics'. She discusses how she triggers sensemaking around CSR by using the 'inherently competitive' nature of executives at the bank: 'all the execs volunteer because they don't want to be seen as missing out on something the others are doing'. She interprets this trigger as executives trying to maintain what Weick (2001) terms positive self-presentation: 'when people have to sit in front of their peers and explain why they haven't done anything for a month it's remarkably effective'. These are clever techniques often used by organisational development specialists or professionals to create change, and here they are clearly being used alongside explicit CSR. Some researchers call the use of techniques to influence sensemaking, 'sensegiving' (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991) and claim sensegiving is a 'fundamental leadership activity *within* organisational sensemaking' (Maitlis, 2005, p. 22). However, the perception that one is 'sensegiving' is arguably also learned through a sensemaking process: the CSR Team Manager also described how she and the CSR team developed this influence strategy through a process of trial and error, retrospectively interpreting that their influence techniques had achieved the desired outcomes. This retrospective understanding then promoted the successful techniques to the 'consensually constructed, coordinated system of action' (Taylor and Van Every, 2000, p. 275) that is a stable system of decision making involving considered choice, as opposed to the improvisation of sensemaking. In other words, we see sensegiving as a learned outcome of sensemaking, but not as a component of sensemaking.

Explicit CSR is not authentic

The Sustainable Supply Chain Manager also advocates the use of explicit policy as a means to engaging suppliers in 'progress' towards sustainability, but takes a more subtle approach. However, her sensemaking of CSR is that it needs cultural change which takes a long time. In the meantime, 'our policies deliver on paper a hell of a lot more than what's happening on the ground', indicating that her approach to CSR is much softer and much more about consultation and engagement than the CSR

Team Manager. However, she is similarly pragmatic: as shown in Table III, her understanding of ‘how ... you get people to act’ is that it doesn’t always pay to have innovative CSR, commenting that, ‘sometimes a really ethical initiative doesn’t get you great press’. She refers to a competitor bank that has pioneered micro-financing as the main thrust of its CSR programme, and the fact this ‘fantastic innovation’ has not won the bank much kudos. Her suggestion is that explicit CSR is more closely linked to behaviour that is not authentic and, therefore, leadership that is also not authentic.

Sensemaking: CSR is necessarily explicit

Underlying our interviewee’s sensemaking that CSR has to be explicit is the pragmatic understanding that it needs to make or justify a business case or be ‘low cost’ to be acceptable at the bank, as suggested by the Head of Responsible Lending. This respondent reports she has survived in the organisation because she has never asked for a budget and the financial assistance training programme she runs, single-handedly, makes a difference to the ability of branch staff to add value for customers at the same time as meeting the bank’s legal obligation to be responsible lenders. However, her efforts are measured by outputs like ‘number of training sessions conducted’ and not the dollar value the programme has contributed, suggesting that it is not considered financial value-adding. This lack of financial objectives for CSR is bemoaned by the Community Team Member who complains, shown in Table III, ‘we don’t have any objectives or clear job descriptions. How can you tell if someone has done a good job? It’s mandatory, but not for us’. Comments like these suggest that there is an uneven view throughout the bank of the potential for CSR initiatives to have a ‘business case’. The CSR Team Manager suggests that the tackling of social issues is about ‘levelling the playing fields’, another way of saying not financial value-adding, but innovative gains may be found in tackling ecological issues via financial services like carbon trading. Equally, the sensemaking of the Group Property Manager who is implementing an energy saving scheme at the bank is that ‘it’s easy to convince people when you can say that you’ll save money as well’.

Implicit versus explicit: conflict, confusion and a fear of greenwash

Strongest evidence of conflict between the implicit and explicit CSR systems emerges in the stories depicting the bank’s CSR initiatives as merely superficial. This suspicion concerning the bank’s motives around CSR was heard most clearly in interview narratives describing consumer scepticism at the bank’s greenwash. Interviewees also comment on the absence of a marketing budget for a new range of ‘green’ products. The product manager himself, in Table III, describes green products as ahead of their time:

I think there’s a big gap between what someone will say they’ll do to mates at a BBQ and what they’re actually prepared to do. I’d count myself in there too. I don’t think we’ve reached the tipping point yet where people will actually go out and spend money on green products.

We noted that tentative steps are being taken to boost the potential for CSR to add value by explicitly communicating it. The Community Team Member explains that, ‘I would go and talk to the branches about what we are doing, and they said ‘how come the bank is not talking about this?’... then (CSR Executive) made a decision that as long as we’ve got substance behind it it’s ok to talk about it’. The NGO Advisor senses that the bank is entering a new stage of starting to ‘build the leverage for your products’, commenting that ‘strategically that’s the next step, having built a good reputation’. In this comment we again see evidence of conflict and confusion around the meaning and practice of CSR as reputation is clearly about explicit CSR, but having ‘substance’ is implicit.

We sense a general confusion and uncertainty surrounding the framing of CSR as implicit or explicit. The bank culture is essentially instrumentally driven, as suggested by the CSR Team Manager’s comment, in Table III, that ‘a bank is a bank is a bank’. This reinforces the notion of explicit CSR – media, awards etc. – as the form of CSR that can be leveraged into dollars. Yet, this view coincides with an apparent will to create implicit CSR as demonstrated in the NGO Advisor comments, also in Table III, that ‘there are people there who are just absolutely passionate about this whole thing’ and expe-

rience tells our CSR leaders that implicit initiatives, value-driven, are more lasting. Even the so-called driver of CSR, the CSR Executive, advocates values as the basis of CSR, right until the day he departs the bank. As shown in Table III, the CSR Executive says,

People actually want to do most of this. You have got to give them permission to do it; you have got to show them that that is what the company wants to see; that it is okay to do this; that it is okay to make some decisions which may have a slightly longer pay-back but actually they have a better overall outcome, but may be a short term cost in it.

Adding to this confusion was the communication from the CSR Executive's staff that his leadership is not conducive to or supportive of implicit CSR. Comments from this person's staff members suggested that within their work unit, his leadership style was more autocratic than values based, or authentic. In essence, it seems that the suspicion that CSR in the bank is mere greenwash is reinforced by the most prominent leadership style, that of auto-

cratic leadership. It appears that staff may actually require a more authentic leadership if the idea of greenwash is to be avoided.

Discussion

Conflicting leadership styles for conflicting CSR systems

This article examines the institutional CSR framework put forward by Matten and Moon (2008) and found that, rather than evidence of a single form of CSR, the organisation under study exhibited both implicit and explicit CSR. Qualitative data analysis revealed the existence of two opposing systems of CSR and leadership. The explicit CSR system linked to autocratic leadership and public relations, and the implicit CSR system linked to authentic/emergent leadership and values. A concept of 'conflict' was found to exist between the two systems, perhaps describing their at-odds relationship to each other.

Figure 4 summarises our findings on the relationships of explicit and implicit CSR, indicating

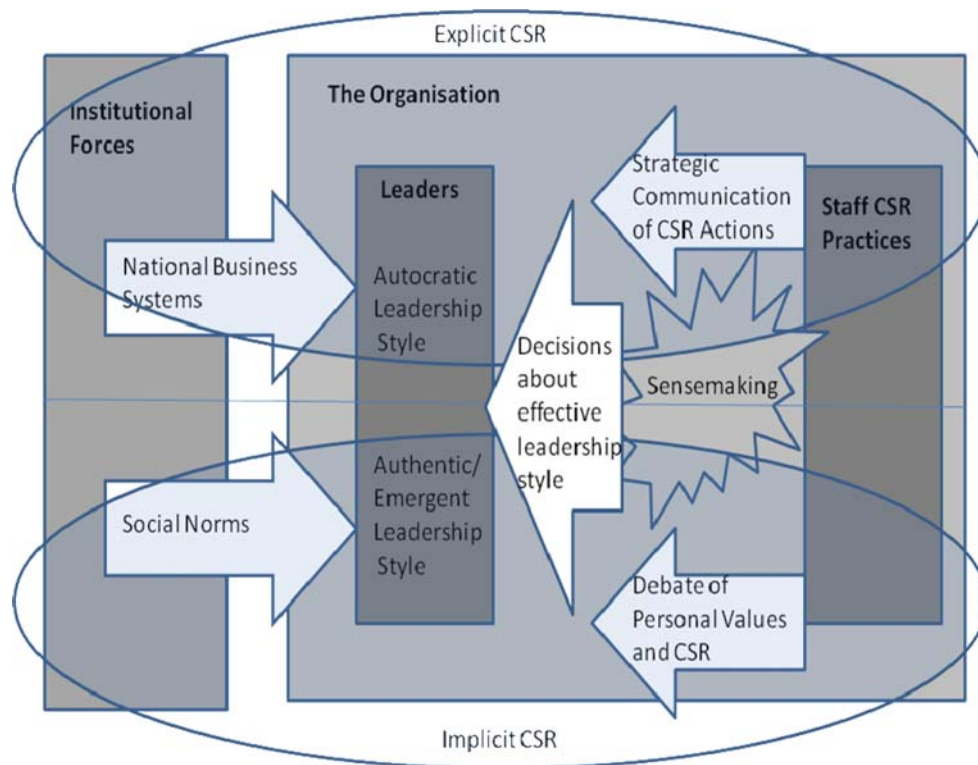


Figure 4. Model of interaction of variables with explicit and implicit CSR.

both implicit and explicit systems as co-existing within the organisation. It reflects our observations that explicit CSR appears to have been operationalised through the strategic communication of CSR actions and that this was linked to an autocratic leadership style. In addition, Figure 4 illustrates that implicit CSR is linked to a discussion of personal values and an authentic and/or emergent leadership style.

Our analysis indicates a complex approach to leadership at the organisation under study as well as co-existence of the two forms of CSR. The Leximancer map (Figure 3) shows a distinct pattern of authentic/emergent leadership and values alongside the more hierarchical autocratic leadership and public relations. These opposing styles should predictably result in expressions of frustration and an indication of conflict from interviewees. Also certainly, interviewees seemed to recognise the conflict between these styles as they referred to the enforcement of explicit CSR objectives by the CSR team as 'guerrilla warfare' and even 'Machiavellian', or in other words, autocratic leadership. In addition, interviewees expressed a generally positive feeling towards socially responsible behaviour at the bank, indicating that by and large they had personally bought into the message of CSR, while as mentioned, accepting that 'a bank is a bank is a bank'. Some even predicted that hard times would mean that the CSR people would be 'the first to go'. Furthermore, as seen in Table III, the values in the corporate scoreboard were certainly seen as a token gesture as hardly any interviewee remembered them and some even referred to them cynically. One interviewee even confessed, as shown in Table III, 'ultimately the decision making process is hierarchical'. These comments demonstrate the tensions between the authentic and autocratic leadership styles co-occurring within the bank. We emphasise, however, that we do not infer that explicit CSR is motivated only for reputational or symbolic purposes, but merely that it refers to the firm's deliberate strategy to promote CSR-related activities within its business model. Our findings indicate that some employees (and perhaps other stakeholders) may interpret the leadership propelling such strategies as not in keeping with the leaders' personal values, but as driven by corporate need.

In order to address Waldman and Siegel's (2008) concerns, we also noted evidence of emergent leadership as some staff spread the word of social responsibility through personal values, and actions, such as distributing material about global consequences of climate change: 'I'm circulating 2 copies of Al Gore's movie around the office, I tell people, "it may spark something in you"' as shown in Table III. Interestingly, it also seems that this emergent leader, through distributing climate change materials, exhibited behaviours arguably similar to those found in complexity leadership as they seemed to have created conditions for staff to be socially responsible in their own ways 'donating money is important so I give talks about Matching Gifts because staff don't know about it'. However, emergent leaders seem to have kept this limited to the individual's existing span of discretion, often limiting its effect and influence to a single point such as a work area or their own financial discretion.

We also found evidence of authentic leadership as some leaders and managers exhibited personal values around social responsibility and sustainable business, as shown in Table III, 'it is about building trust and respect for the intent ... you have got to walk the talk'. However, the conflicting style of autocratic leadership was mentioned by all interviewees, indicating that it was likely to be the prevailing leadership style. Interestingly, some authentic and emergent leaders who had been recruited in to the bank on the CSR appeal of its public relations materials expressed their confusion over the autocratic style of some leaders. Some interviewees also saw the conflict between the two styles of leadership as overwhelming and sufficient to push them out of the organisation. This last finding is certainly consistent with the research of Van Vugt et al. (2008) in relation to autocratic leadership and its influence on staff engagement.

In essence, it seems that the bank exhibited two opposing styles of leadership that have been used to promote two different forms of CSR. Explicit CSR, due to its association with public relations, recruitment and processes, was closely linked to autocratic leadership where objectives, reports, targets and public indices were promoted sometimes through methods perceived as 'Machiavellian'. In this form of CSR, leaders enforced and required staff to meet

standards, tick boxes and report up the chain on progress.

Implicit CSR, on the other hand, due to its relationship to personal values and action, was closely linked to authentic and emergent leadership where discussion, independent thinking and personal inspiration were encouraged. Finally, the data seemed to indicate that the explicit CSR system was deployed to recruit staff who were then authentically socially responsible, which then reinforced the implicit CSR system. However, our data flagged the possibility that the explicit CSR system along with its associated bureaucratic/autocratic leadership could 'wear down' these staff and cause them to leave, or contemplate leaving, the organisation.

Conclusions and implications

This research, using an Australian organisation, indicates that CSR as implemented within organisations is too complex to be categorised according to a dualistic framework. Matten and Moon (2008) modelled a framework where organisations are characterised as either predominantly implicit or explicit in their practice of CSR. Confirming Matten and Moon (2008), this study found evidence for the predominance of both forms within a single organisation. This perhaps reflects the national business system of Australia, with influences from both US and Europe. We need to compare the results of this study, however, with that of a detailed study at the level of the organisation in one of the defining national business systems that Matten and Moon (2008) describe to make a more wide-reaching conclusion.

We have also addressed Waldman and Siegel's (2008) concern at a lack of research around leadership behaviour and CSR, finding that an organisation implementing CSR could be using autocratic and authentic leadership styles as well as allowing for emergent leaders. Finally, the inherent conflict between the implicit and explicit forms of CSR and their linked leadership approaches of authentic and autocratic leadership, respectively, can be sourced in the sensemaking of the complex notion of CSR itself. It seems that leaders are contesting both systems to determine a way forward in understanding and implementing CSR demands within their organisation.

The fact that these opposing systems are linked on the conceptual map (Figure 3) by the concept of 'conflict' is perhaps most fascinating. As mentioned, previous research has already indicated the link between debate and innovation (Boerner et al., 2007). Debate is often encouraged by transformational leaders (Boerner et al., 2007) and, alongside intellectual stimulation, it is thought that this factor is a key stimulator of innovation in teams. Hence, our finding of 'conflict' could be seen to be a precursor for team or even organisational innovation. We emphasise that it would be a precursor as we note that our findings were of authentic leadership rather than transformational leadership, and while authentic leaders encourage personal authenticity of their followers, they are more acceptive of individual difference and not known for uniting diverse groups through visionary leadership, as transformational leaders are. Future research should attempt to further interrogate the place of transformational leadership in managing the 'conflict' between explicit and implicit CSR, and the associated potential for innovation.

We suggest that transformational leaders may be needed alongside authentic leaders when implementing CSR initiatives at least in some phases of implementation, for the key reason of their success in encouraging innovation through the questioning of ideas (Shin and Zhou, 2003). It is this behaviour that may be a kind of linchpin in the effort to successfully bed down the complex concept of CSR in organisations. Although the current research provides us with little indication of whether this may be phase dependent, as we made no records of timing of incidents in the interviews, it suggests the value of further research in this area.

The finding that explicit and implicit CSR co-exist in a single organisation is not at all surprising if a pragmatic view is taken. Explicit CSR is certainly a method of developing a business case for CSR. Theoretically, a socially responsible organisation is more attractive to potential staff and, therefore, it is less expensive to recruit in a talent competitive market (Phillips, 2008). It is also somewhat rewarded by customers and shareholders making it simpler to manage stakeholders and obtain further market share (Hammann et al., 2009; Blumenfeld, 2008). Implicit CSR has none of these rewards as it is not publicised; however, implicit CSR does encourage staff

engagement and commitment (Vitell and Singhapakdi, 2007). Because they produce different organisational outcomes for businesses, it is not surprising that companies would want the best of both worlds.

In addition, when you recruit someone on the basis of one set of organisational values but lead them under a different set, you are certainly violating the psychological contract of employment (Orvis et al., 2008). As defined by Rousseau (1998), the psychological contract of employment is the individual employee's subjective perceptions of the obligations binding both the employee and the employer. Since it is subjective, it takes in things outside a conventional formal contract, such as fair dealing, expectations of transparency, loyalty, and support in ethical decision making. We note that while the organisation studied here attempts to publicise values based CSR, our analysis reveals issues in really 'living' this form of CSR within its walls. In that sense, the psychological contract of employment may be violated as staff are joining the bank under false pretences. Once this violation is discovered, employee loyalty and commitment may be tested.

It certainly seems likely that an explicit CSR system will always promote and come in conflict with an implicit CSR system, as also suggested by Matten and Moon (2005). It also seems likely that in the more hierarchical organisation, explicit CSR will be linked with autocratic leadership and implicit CSR with authentic leadership. Therefore, further research should examine whether the combinations of these systems needs to be mediated through some other variable such as another style of leadership. It may very well be that transformational leadership, although not authentic, is an effective means of dealing with the conflict between the two types of CSR. Transformational leadership may be the key to moving conflict forward to debate and innovation, thereby, providing the innovation needed to produce 'solutions' and thus more sustainable business. Organisations wanting to implement CSR should, therefore, be cognisant of the diversity of skills of their leaders and may need to encourage diverse styles to be successful.

Finally, it is important to recognise the limitations of this research. The most substantial limitation is that we studied only a single organisation. It may be that these findings are not transferable to other organisations in total or that they are dependent on

the type of organisation, a bank in this case. Therefore, additional research is needed to determine whether these findings are situational rather than generalisable. In addition, although we attempted Yin's (2003) triangulation of analysis by simultaneously examining sensemaking, leadership style and CSR form, the study also suffers from limited method bias as only interviews and observations were used to collect the data. These findings could be tested by additional research method such as the use of quantitative questionnaires alongside qualitative data. Also, although we have asked interviewees to talk about CSR implementation from its initial inception we did not ask them to refer to specific years, thereby limiting our analysis of the CSR implementation and leadership style over time. It may be that interviewees would offer a different perspective at the beginning of the process rather than years later, as is the case here. However, we recognise that this would involve collecting data from staff with longer tenure over several years, which would also limit the sample size and be costly. Also, because this is a qualitative study using selected participants, it may be that our findings are not indicative of the entire organisation, although we endeavoured to seek out all relevant CSR leaders and influencers, we recognise that we may not have succeeded in finding everyone and, therefore, the sample may not be of sufficient power to warrant the results given here.

Suggestions for further research

The current research does indicate an interesting path for future research. Firstly, we could complement the results found here with a more quantitative approach. These could be achieved through the use of questionnaires and a regression-based analysis of the factors that align with explicit CSR versus implicit CSR. Secondly, further research could examine the effects of these leadership styles on some external measure of CSR success. It may be that although explicit CSR aligns with autocratic leadership this style may not be effective for communication to other stakeholder groups and may actually affect the success of the explicit CSR strategy. Therefore, we encourage researchers to examine the effect of type of CSR on leader style and stakeholder

impact through additional measures such as an empirical study of groups of organisations where internal factors are examined alongside external outcomes. Finally, we encourage researchers to examine whether the effect found here is an organisational lifecycle phenomena that may disappear as organisations bed down CSR further in their culture. We stress that the proposed use of the transformational leadership style among other leader styles may be transient and dependent on time.

Notes

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² Signatories to the Equator Principles agree to provide loans only to those projects whose sponsors can demonstrate their ability and willingness to comply with processes that ensure that projects are developed in a socially responsible manner, according to sound environmental management practices.

Appendix

Sample interview questions

Describe your job role
 How did your job come about?
 What is most rewarding about your work?
 Whose leadership style do you admire?
 What is your leadership philosophy?
 How would the people you work with describe you?
 How would you like subordinates to describe you?
 As a manager, what values are important to you in the workplace?
 How do you communicate your vision?
 In relation to

- the CSR issue you work with
- Your role in the CSR issue
- the bank

What is most difficult about your work?
 How do you overcome resistance?
 How do you balance competing interests?
 How do you help others solve problems at work?

What type of people skills are necessary in your role?
 What type of task skills are necessary in your role?
 What are your priorities as a leader?
 What are your strengths as a leader?
 What would you like to improve about your leadership style?
 What is the leadership style encouraged at the bank?
 Have you noticed any changes to the encouraged leadership style with the new CEO?
 What is the leadership style encouraged in CSR roles?
 Do you find any leadership styles annoying or frustrating?
 How do you judge success in your role for yourself, for others?
 Describe a difficult workmate or subordinate
 If you had to choose would you call yourself a passive or active manager?
 In your view how important are performance targets in your role at the bank?

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